



BIG DEAL 2.....

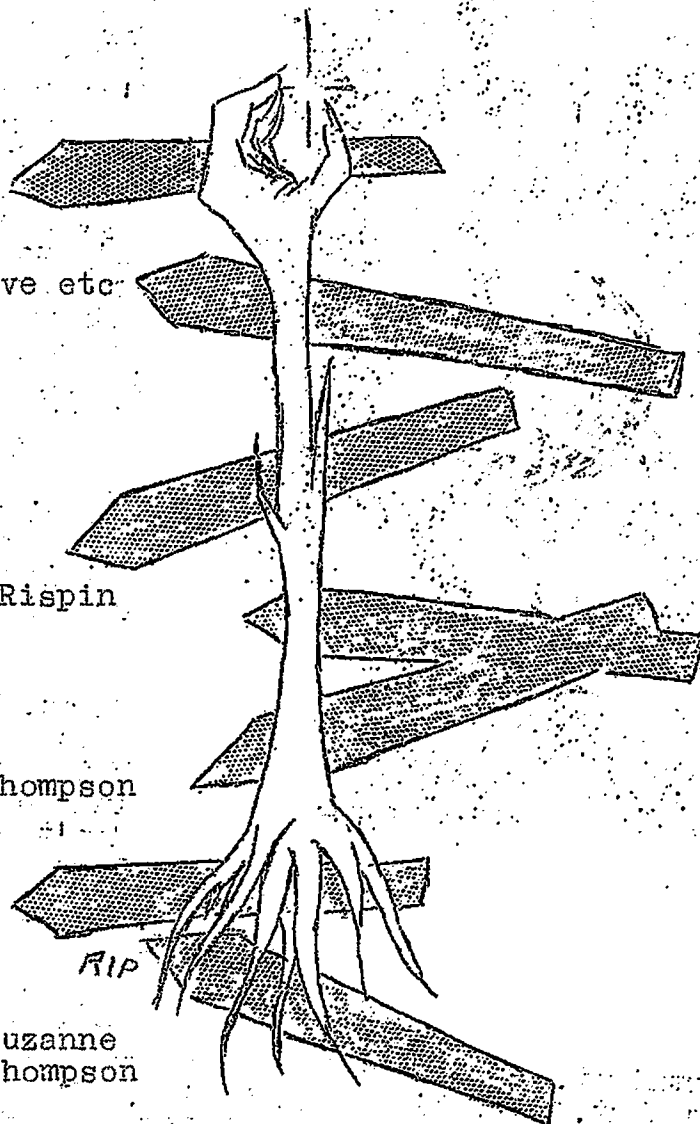
"HALO"....Dave Hale

"MAILING COMMENTS..DPH" Dave etc

"I WAS A TEENAGE MAIDSTONE
MANIAC" Rispin

"ARTICLE"....Maggie Thompson

"ARTWORK" by RIP,
HARRY,
TERRY JEEVES
and the terror of
Highgate Common....
Suzanne
Thompson



Published & "edited" by Dave Hale, soon to be departed of Stourbdge.
Duplication by courtesy of Ken Cheslin, known to his friends as "Sir".

HALO....a pseudo editorial



RIP

There's no pretending that anything grand was planned for this space, but it was going to be certainly more than this. I've just explained to Ken about my typer busting again, me having to go for a holiday tomorrow and not coming back till after the September deadline, and about a trip to Tewkesbury yesterday which left me without stencils. Hell. Things have ganged up on me. Still, we do present a fair selection of ideas, apart from the mcs... Alan's piece has been hanging around for some time. Maggie's was forced out of her with considerable effort by her sisters and me. Maybe it'll interest certain segments of the mailing. I hesitate to say the lunatic fringe.....

My exam results were quite favourable, and in October I shall take up residence in Manchester. This home address will still be good, indeed it will be best because I don't anticipate staying in the Levenshulme digs very long..wot with landladies and everything.

Back from the Isle of Skye a mere three weeks, sees me off again to the English Lakes, hosteling for a fortnight. Then it'll be back to work, then University, then ghu knows what. Ah, tis a sweet life. In fact I'm just beginning to appreciate the joys of school life. Maybe this feeling will fade, I was pretty relieved for the exams to be over, and even more so for the results to be out...and favourable!

Just remembered. This'll make about 65 pages for my first OMPA mailing. Technically LS & Big Deal I are pms to this mailing, even tho they were posted out BEFORE this mailing. Makes you think.

Promise more next time.

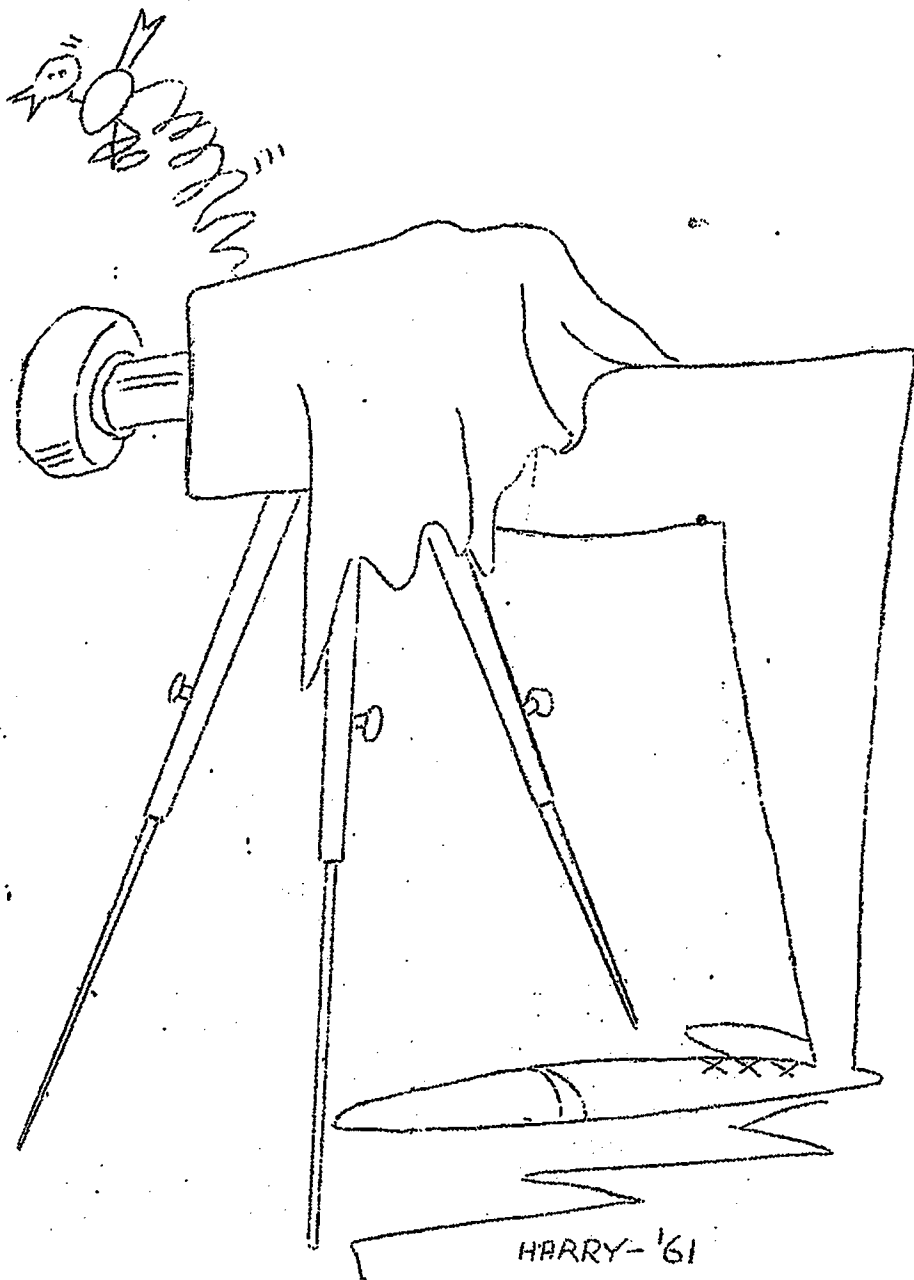
Hale & Farewell

Dave

DEADLY THE

HARRY

12



To express public dissatisfaction for these mailing comments would be both presumptuous and stupid. Maybe it's just my usual apprehension at reading my own work or the knowledge that they have been done far too hurriedly to even remotely resemble the "polished gems" they should be. They have had to be written in odd moments between returning from Skye, a part-time job shoving football pools through doors, and setting out for a fortnights walking in the English Lakes. Bear with me gentlefolk.

The 32nd Mailing again by courtesy of Ken Chaslin and thank you those who sent me their own OMPazines; Archie, JMB, Terry, KenC, Jhim and Joe.

ERG-Terry Jeeves

Here we are again; snide anti-CND comments marring an otherwise very entertaining magazine. The quotation from the "Observer" evokes a comment of "So What?" and nothing else. CND types, just because they want to avoid atomigeddon, don't pretend to be saints, and does anyone expect them to be. You'll escape lightly (sez he with gore in his eyes and brimstone in his breath), the main attack is saved for another of your fellow scorn-pourers a little later on. You must agree though Terry that the CND has done some good in making people think about these problems, whatever the outcome is.

Unfortunately some of your mcs on the subject have fragments of truth in them. My own experience around the village shows that to some extent a CND badge is a social symbol. Mainly in the minds of the virginous nymphettes (tho' we try our best Bobbie!) at the local High School. Mind you, this is only the very young (circa 15) age group, after that they either actively support the CND or join the Young Conservatives. I wonder which is the worse fate. The "Observer" should send a reporter to a YC meeting some wednesday night; drugs maybe not, but vice aplenty.

You droll-weevil you!

Here's Bertie taking the rap again. "Mindless Idealist" indeed. Are you one of these people who think idealism is a dirty word? You may scorn this particular facet of idealism - thinking seriously about the future safety of the human race - but don't forget that without idealism there would have been no progress, ungrammatical as it may be; no nothin. He may be a free thinker, thank god somebody is, but mindless is just a thoughtless slander. Even at 90 he can muster more native wit, charm and humour than many men a quarter of his age. You've got to see him in person to appreciate the full magnitude of his personality. Lord Russell is so modest it almost hurts at times, remember his interview on "Tonight" not so long ago, and he never expects anyone to follow him or his many philosophies.

End of diatribe - from this side anyway.

The mention of arguments against the existance of god strikes a responsive chord. The other day I was talking to a friend who's training to be a vicar at some theological college, Kelham methinks, and he told me some of the arguments he's taught for the existance of god. They seemed pretty superficial at first hearing, but when you think about them take on some depth. I wonder what you make of them.

- 1) Cause and Effect:- everything is caused by something else, thus going back in time god must be the prime cause of the universe.
- 2) Human beings cannot conceive anything they have not had experience of before. Therefore, so the christian reasons, there must be a god or we would not have been able to conceive of such a thing.
- 3) Every known human community has had some sort of god and some sort of religion.

There were other arguments, but the above are the main ones.

Thanks for the crossword. Had some trouble over one or two, one can't help being thick, can I?

DOLPHIN-Elinor Busby

The attitude to negroes is one which has been festering away for far too long. Some of the factors causing it are probably the ones you list, but there may be other less obvious considerations, and these could have a more fundamental, harder to erradicate, effect. Take, for a start, the fact that negroes have been slaves, have been exploited, subjugated and humiliated. The oriental has suffered nothing on this scale, at least at the hands of western folk, and consequently does not bear the "slave-stigma". Orientals have had the benefit of coherent nations and national institutions to back them up, even give the individual self and racial confidence. Negroes have only very recently aquired nations, and even these are viewed with some trepidation by western type governments...Ghana for one. Because of their previous mainly tribal/nomadic existance negroes have made little contribution to civilisation, while orientals like the chinese have obviously vast accomplishments.

Could we hope, Elinor, that the fall of conformism that you foretell will lead to the end of the US racial troubles? Your country could do with a little hybrid vigour.

There have been vague mumblings this side of the pond concerning con banquets and fancy expensive hotels. My attitude to this is simple: a con can't be classified as a holiday because of its shortness, and should thus be as cheap as is possible without sleeping in draughty morgue type places. I don't go to a con specifically to enjoy a hotel, I go to meet

fans etc, and don't expect to pay hard earned money for say seperate bathrooms or other such non-essentials. Full dress for a banquet is plain regimentation and enforcement of a much despised (among fans) conformity. Hell, this is hypocrisy.

Good for Buz! If he feels like wearing open shirts and no jacket he should. Bravo! Strike a blow for freedom.

Nice typeface for headings. Enjoyable to read. More.

VAGARY-Bobbie Gray

Parts of this magazine do things to my adrenal secretory epithelium..it sweats..well..maybe not blood..but..adrenalin. To quote a very dry zoology textbook "The body is raised to a battle footing". Gosh.

Recently the "Daily Herald" has shed a great deal of its former extreme left-wingism and has become quite enlightened. It's still a very critical paper, now lashing out at the socialists as well as macs mob.

"The majority of CNDers are a lot of unwashed bums..etc...ad nauseam". Surely this is rather obviously absurd and a rather cheap



attempt to discredit the CND? Most people, after they've got nowhere by trying to use logical arguments, resort to this; though most of them are a little more subtle. This does reveal your predudice and ignorance on the matter.

You are calling me an unwashed bum, also a great number of my friends and some of the most intelligent and respected folk in the country. If you don't mind me telling the truth, and even if I am biased I don't let it run away with me. I am not an unwashed bum, besides one all my friends are perfectly clean and hygenic. As for general CND membership, the lunatic fringe apart - all organisations have their lunatic fringe - damn them, they are also perfectly sanitary people. Could it be that you get your opinions from the haunted fishbowl in the corner of your room? Have you seen photos of marchers and sit-downers and noticed that they look a little dirty? God woman...would you be spotlessly clean after having the guts to walk 60miles for something you believed in. Do climbers wear their sunday best or dustmen evening dress? Go out and meet the CND. Go to meetings, discussions, forums, films, weekend schools in conjunction with the UN. Go and see all your unwashed bums and snivelling beatniks!

You sound rather like a HUAC member trying to smear an unfriendly witness. Also you're mistaken in thinking the CND organise "sit-downs"; it's the Committee of 100 who do this.

If the remarks regards 16 year old virgins weren't so utterly naive I might get angry...all I can do is smile. It made me wonder what kind of mind could interpret an innocent (and intendedly humourous) remark of Jhim's in such a way. Again, I'm one of "you boys", in fact three years more so than Jhim who can vote etc. And even if it is a nasty thing to say, it looks as if your frustrations are showing. Thoughts of doing such a survey are funny though;....."er, excuse me Miss! But are you a 16 year old buck virgin?"

Your knowledge of 16 year old girls is dissimilar to mine Bobbie. Only the lunatic, oversexed nympho crowd throw themselves at boys as you suggest, and can you blame boys if they take advantage of this, they too have hormones. Most of the girls I know are quite moral, and any girl "throwing herself" at a boy would repulse the boy as well as incurring the dissapproval of her own sex..."oh, the shameless hussy!".

I disagreed with Jhim for two reasons. First I believed he was wrong (and still do). Second he seemed to be bigoted towards the topic, and bigotry on any subject is Not A Good Thing as Cal Demmon might say.

The Civil Service is in a lamentable state isn't it. Maggie works in the village National Insurance Office part time and says that she does more work than the regulars and that most of the work could be done by monkeys! Which is probably why they employed her. Crash.....

I've noticed in a lot of mailing comments that when someone has criticised another magazine rather violently he usually compliments the recipient of the criticism at the end of his rave. This is a namby-pamby thing which I will try not to do. By a strange chance I do agree with some of your points...."glandular diseases" for one. John Rackham's folio was pretty revolting, and this may account for the apparent lack of response he's been experiencing.

Many years ago I became interested in mental testing and managed to find a book of tests. You may know that, in theory at least, these tests are not available to the general public because of the danger of some bloke trying to develop "test sophistication" and thus making the testers work of little use. This sophistication, which results in higher ratings as tests continue, can become a major problem to the psychologist. No one knows whether it's due to a less nervous attitude or an actual change of method of approach to the tests, maybe a bit of both.

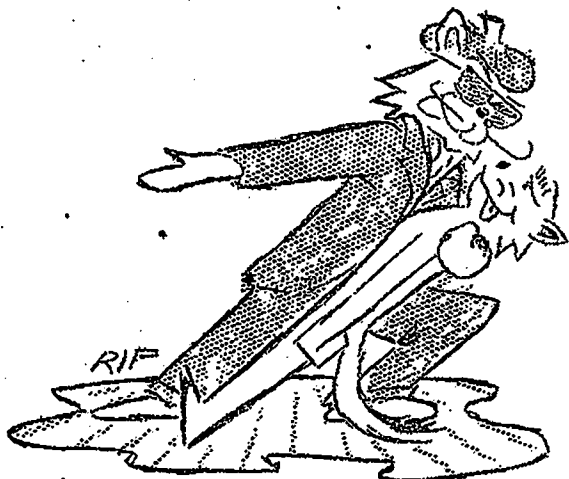
Could egoboo, and even a slight degree of conceit, have had something to do with your liking of mental tests and exams? Imagine, you're an intelligent person, often more so that your mates, and at school or in the army you fared better at these tests than others and consequently recieved egoboo. When I was quite young and we hadn't reached the stage of interlectual seperation I used to love tests just because I was quite good, comparatively. But when other equally intelligent people were compared with me, and the results used to further the educational rat-race, things took on a different light.

The interviews at University College London were followed by pretty advanced testing. This place is one of the centres of psychological measurement and they give their students practice by letting them devise new tests for potential undergraduates. This they do with great and fiendish glee. First we had a Reasoning test..like you had to work things out from data presented in varying ways. Some of this type were strictly mathematical and some tests of deductive logic. Then we were presented with vocabulary tests, most of the words were utterly unfamiliar, and the remainder vague. Hehl. Finally, a so called personality test.

This was the first time I'd encountered anything like this, there supposed to be fiddle-proof and any attemptto fiddle them is taken as evidence of emotional instability. Their simplicity is very deceptive, a series of about 30 yes/no questions to be answered as quickly as possible, the idea is not to leave time for fiddle type answers and so get an accurate as possible evaluation. For example "do you ever feel lonely?"; this to be answered with a simple yea or nay and nothing else. Obviously this is limited, allowing no scope for degree of emotion, and in my opinion perhaps unsubtle.

If anyone would like some typical tests it could perhaps be arranged for December. Maybe by then I'll have had some first hand experience.

It was interesting to see how your attitude towards postmailings developed throughout the magazine. First you merely commented that you didn't particulaly favour them but were not prepared to do away with them alltogether, then end yp trying to get them banned. The machinat-ions of the ~~sepi~~ human mind.



"LET ME TAKE YOU
TO THE CATS-BAR!"

LIZ ST. BUNGLER-Pat Kearney

If some of your phrasing were slightly corrected your arguments would make a great deal more sense. Eliminate the word "true", this appears to be typical commie mass emotional appeal stuff, and substitute "Average". The world depends more on these men than it does on the interlectual, assuming the stereotyped images of the groups, and if the "workers" were to seriously stop working civilisation would begin to crumble fast. Now, do I remember something about this in an Azimov book? And if the interlectuals threw in the towel the same thing would occur, only much more slowly. Pat, if somebody didn't sit down and think where would new concepts come from? What would happen to progress? The "true" man has little time for concepts, and without these your much vaulted progress is a figment.

No doubt, these "son of a bitch politicians" are a bit dim at times, but have you ever thought how difficult their job is? Have you any idea of the complexity and grasp of ideas that government involves. Most of our politicians are probably not inherently bad or stupid, but just caught in a gigantic web of vested interest, propoganda and ghod knows what else. Why not try and give them sympathy not slanging. This is begining to resemble a sermon, but would you like to try their job?

Unfortunately the government is only the figure head, the target for abuse, power lies hidden. (So says Mata Hale, who has been reading far too many James Bond books.) What happens when idealistic people like the late Sec. General of the UN (can't even begin to spell his name) try to apply enlightened policies. Hell. Vested interest takes over again and nothing gets done.

You are perfectly correct about indifference though. Folk are vehement against the CND, but haven't got the guts to support any causes themselves.

Ah, PUNCH. It is a superb magazine, far more serious in recent years though. Cartoon quoting..ok... Kennedy and Khrush holding tapers to fuses of a bomb shaped world..says one.."but I can blow us all up with a bigger bang than you can blow us all up with...". Cummings.

The typeface on page 13 is attractive, but maybe isn't this carrying margins to the extreme?

DARK STAR-Terry Carr

Thank you for this magazine Terry. Maybe it's only to be expected from you, but my impression was of time well spent in reading it.

Punctuation and grammar generally are devils with me, I admit. In fact it'd be no good denying it, my spelling and grammar are obviously very much faulty. Archie Mercer sent a LoC the other day, pointing out spelling mistakes galore. They just slip past through ignorance. As for other reasons..hell....time, convenience, lack of experience or ability, or just plain laziness. The affect of schooling is vague, there are large differences between schools of the same class. Today most students are taught english to pass an exam, The General Certificate of education, which is needed for almost any kind of job. Unfortunately

most students/teachers think only of the exam, and when this is passed the subject is dropped. Anyway, when punctuation during these classes is mentioned it's not hammered home, and the resultant opinion is that punctuation is a matter of personal taste. Also when most fen were schooled they were probably not much inclined to writing, and only now regret not having any definitive knowledge of the english language.

"Most English fen lower middle class..":.hmm. From my meagre knowledge a goodly portion may be. Economically a lot certainly are not, but because of their present interests (at least those interests that are apparent in fmz & letters) they could be classed thus. The extent to which the language is used will probably play a more important part than strictly formal education. A scientific grammar school education plays merry hell with english

Defenestration. It's funny how when you first see a word and understand its meaning it seems to haunt you for weeks afterwards. Only last night Maggie was talking about the defenestration of Prague. This was, apparently, the continentals answer to Jew baiting. All the catholics defended their religious convictions by throwing all the protestants out of high windows. Nasty. I don't suppose the protestants much fancied this kind of sport, but it seems better fun than Bingo. Up to then I'd thought the word meant something entirely different....er.. like taking yer glasses off or the like.

Scrape the paint off pencils. If you get these hexagonal type you can play cricket with them. Mark 1 to 6 around one part and then on another the various ways of being out. CAUGHT....STUMPED....LBW... BOWLED..etc...there are endless variations. Some slick business man got the idea and made them out of metal. Why do you think people use ball pens nowadays?

It is possible to open the Underground train doors. Mind you, it'll probably be a leetlymuch expensive...£5 or so. Occasionally some humanitarian guard opens them and lets air blow through the carriage, but even then you are stopped from getting near them by a barrier.

OUTPOST-Fred Hunter

You are "finding out" about Gestether and their money grabbing policies. We find that their machines are superb, and their free service a godsend, but come down to supplies and they do an awful about face. In fact it's best to avoid the supplies if at all possible and get cheaper stuff elsewhere. The 62 stencils are ok and cheap, tho you can get even cheaper dual fitting stencils off Roneo. There are all sort of tricks to getting cheap supplies, sometimes they work here..dunne about u.



Do you have "cinema clubs" as opposed to regular fleapits? On Skye they had these clubs alternating with dances. In fact these dances could bear dwelling on. They start just as the pubs close and carry on till two or three in the morning patronised by tough fishing types and their girls.

Try reading a book or two on the history of civil disobedience, it might help to blunt the edges of your apparent bigotry on the subject.

Interesting to note that you read every fanzine. What do you do when you've read them? Like you've now had 2 free issues of spinge, and it'd be sort of nice to get a response, even to say get the hell out of my letter boxes.

ETC & DEM DAM PMS.....

SOUFFLE-JMB...now I see how you manage to produce a cheap tradezine after getting Double Star.

MAINIAC-Andy Manie...easy to read.

MORPH-John Roles....are the book lists your own? If so, why is the repro of same superior to the rest of the mag?

PFOOT-George Spencer...SO YOU are the GS who pubbed GRIFFIN and kept quoting Russell a while back? Good man.

BIG DEAL-Dave Hale..pity you left it so late or you might have got a few mcs this time. Fool Hale.

AMBLE-Archie Mercer...why, oh why, is it that I never find myself able to comment on amble. Sorry.

LES SPINGE-Hell....a bit scrappy and far too many mistakes punctuation and grammar wise. Colourful at least. Why does nobody review this magazine?

TRIBULATION----- qualified or no I'm going to pick a few favourites for this mailing.

Best Magazine	DARK STAR	Terry Carr
Best Nit Pikin'	VAGARY	Bobbie Gray
Best Cover	<u>Scot</u>	Ethel Lindsay

Girls are like diesel engines. They're one hell of a job to get started, but when they're going one hell of a job to stop.....L. A. Walters



Mr. James G. Linwood and myself found ourselves on Netherfield Station at 5.30 am on a July Saturday morning. We were going to see a certain youngfan of ill repute called Paul Andrews, from Maidstone, Kent. As students of English geography and Anglo-Saxon will no doubt have realised about 158 miles separate these two places, so Paul had agreed to meet us in London at 2 am.

The night before I'd hit the road straight from work in Irlam, and being the damn flukey hitchhiker that I am, I was at Linwood's abode in Netherfield 3 hours later. We'd played records and talked of many fannish things until sometime after one am. Then it was that Jhim suggested the way we should hitch to London on the morrow. The situation was fouled somewhat by the fact that he'd been "asked" to do a Sunday Shift at his pit the following day.. Which meant that Jhim had to get back to Nottingham the same day. Maybe it was just coincidence, but I could have sworn I heard an owl hoot when Jhim suggested we go down the A6. I was too tired to argue much in favour of going down the Great North Road, so we agreed, and kipped forthwith.

Jhim woke me as dawn was breaking, mumbled that we had a train to catch out of town, and went back to sleep. I was dressed and ready before I realized it was 5 am. Then I felt tired and depressed as Jhim bumbled through looking for his toothbrush.

We left the train, peopled by sleepy colliers and a sleepy guard at some village a couple of minutes walk from the A6. We hit the road in high spirits, aiming to be in London by 11 am.

After the first hour in the same spot we were not so highspitited? That was a sample of the sort of luck we had all the way, so there is no need to here recount the trials and tribulations of we two hitchhiking fen. Suffice to say that when we were due to meet Paul and his Mob "outside Charring Cross Station" we were sitting in the end-of-the-line London Tube Station at Watford after giving up thoughts of hitching further that day. "After all," Jhim said, "we're only two hours late."

When we eventually arrived at Charring Cross, round about 4 pm, we rushed from the tube exit round to the front of the station, keeping a

wheather eye open for a likely looking band of idiots.

There wasn't an idiot in sight.

It was then that I realized there are slight disadvantages to meeting people, ye, even fen, one has never met before. Which of this streaming crowd, homeward bound from the offices of the City, was our target? When the steaming crowd had vanished in the direction of the booking office, talking earnestly to each other, we were not left with much choice. So, nothing daunted, James and myself wandered into the great vaulted hall of the station, thinking perhaps they had gone for a cuppa in the eatery.

As we passed the stationmaster's office, three very likely looking ...er, people(?) came our way. At first glance they looked quite ordinary, one with a conservatively styled suit on, the other two more casually dressed. Then on realized they all had on bowler hats. Black bowler hats with propellers on!

Jhim and I walked past them, pokerfaced, taking in every detail of this fabulous sight.

The conservatively dressed fan had a conservatively decorated bowler. He had a simple collection of Rotslerish illos around his hatband. The stark simplicity of this design showed that here indeed was a trufan. The other fan had a crewcut and looked like a Freas illustration from a Kenneth J. Malone story. His bowler was most sumptuously enriched with a scale model of a biplane, and a propeller at the front of this gettup. The remaining fan capped the lot, as you might say, - things must have gone to his head, for he had a propeller at the front of his hat, a begging mouse at the rear, and a plastic lilly on top which glowed! On later examination we found inside it a bulb, with a battery inside the hat itself.

After we passed this trio Jhim and I looked at each other, and we both seemed to be thinking the same thoughts..."Why didn't we think of it!" The three fen vanished out the front entrance of the station. "I wonder which is Paul?" Jhim whispered.

The walked past once more, making the passers-by turn their heads, but most only for a moment, as though to accept the reality of this sight would shatter their safe little worlds.

"I think he's the one with the SF book in his pocket", I replied.

"The one with the rotslerishillos on his not, you mean", Jhim muttered. "I think you're right", he said. Then, "Let's see for sure."

By now the three bowler-beanied fans had reached their objective, a phone box, at the side of the platform. They all tried to get in, but somehow the GPO hadn't forseen such a mob raiding one of its phone boxes, so the result was that the biplane stayed outside.

As we approached a dawning realization struck him, and, with his eyes fixedly on us as we advanced, he gently tapped the pane of the phone booth, against which Paul had thoughtfully stuck his pocketbook.

So it was that Jhim and I first met Paul Andrews and some of the Maidstone Mob. Paul was indeed the rotslerilloed one, Jeff Tucker was the biplane, and the lopsided grin on the face of the lillyheaded one

told us he was Lloyd Batt. Paul told us that they were just ringing Maidstone for the third time to make sure we hadn't gone straight through and they had been there on time, at least, But then the census of opinion seemed to be in favour of food.

This we found in a small Italian type cafe down a side street near the station. Over steaks, and the curious stares of the other patrons we nattered awhile. Jhim and I apologising for the lateness, but blaming everything on luck, which had indeed stayed in Nottingham when we started out. The hats passed around the circle, and so we found that Lloyd's battery was insulated so that he didn't get a shock when he wore the thing alright.

After a very satisfying meal we departed in the general direction of Pauls car. This is/was a 1948 Triumph, the type that has seats in the boot. Jhim and I got the boot. We shared it with a huge pile of Ballantine SF titles which Paul said he'd ordered soon after the ban on US paperbacks was lifted, and now they'd all arrived at once, so he'd a nice packet to pay for them.

The Mob had no plans, so I suggested we phone up the Halls to see if they were amenable to a crowd dropping in for a few hours. Unfortunately I'd forgotten their number and I knew they weren't listed in the directory under Hall, so I had a blind stab in the dark, it was Hall that was left open, yo me....

The gruff, military voice on the other end of the line told me quite definately that there wasn't anyone called Tikwis there. As per usual my stab in the dark went wide of the mark. Wrong Number.

Someone suggested passing the time away at Battersea Pleasure Gardens on the other side of the Thames. As none could better this suggestion, we all set off in the Triumph for the Gardens. It wasn't long before we realized that none of us knew where Battersea was. So we had a sightseeing tour of London by car, inadvertantly, though quite welcome, to me as all I saw of the place was after I'd emerged from a Tube Station, which does disorganise my sense of "oneness" about a city. After gaily spinning about the streets, getting the glares of City Types as they caught sight of the mutant forms of their favourite headgear in the car, we wandered over London Bridge and suddenly appeared at the entrance to Battersea. The area looked somewhat familiar, and after I looked over the roadway and across the Bridge over the Thames, I realized why. This was Chelsea Bridge Rd., begora, the home of that budding Berry....George Locke!

An opportunity like this could not be ignored. We therefore descended on the Locke household. But it was done fiendishly. While Paul and the Maniacs parked the car, Jhim and I raced up to Georges 4th floor flat. While I knocked on the door Jhim stayed himself on the stairs out of sight of the door.....

We were in luck....."H-h-h-h-h-el-lo, George, me old pal," I grated, "Wouldn't you invite an old and travel weary fan in for a few minutes..?"

George blanched perceptibly, "Who the hell are you?"

.....to be continued (I hope!)

NEXT mailing you will meet the mysterious new George Locke and will follow him through strange and torturous adventures to a discovery of cosmic import.

An exciting penetrating, revealing, truth exposing article on the vagaries of modern youth. "I was a teenage unhygienic unwashed bum...and lived!"

Dare you read this?

by Margie Thompson

A great deal of trash has been written about and spoken of the annual March from Aldermaston to London, so here, from someone who knows, is a sort of account of Aldermaston 1962.

The thing started off in a muddy field in Aldermaston, full not only of beatniks, but also of perfectly clean, respectable folk (in fact one person I spoke to was so hygienic that he'd had two baths before he went, because he knew there wouldn't be many washing facilities on the March). Anyway, you can't really expect people to put on their best clothes when they won't have an opportunity to change them for four days (and nights). To continue, at this stage, we were wondering how the thing would ever get organised, and how we would ever find our contingent. We were marching with the London Festival Singers, and we eventually found them hiding under someone else's banner.

Because the March was so long this year, we had to carry on without a break on the first day. In fact the only rest we had was an unofficial one when everyone sat down in the road for some obscure reason. Incidentally, this was not a sitdown - a great many marchers don't sit. When we tried to squat in a field to eat what we hopefully called "tea" - actually one crispbread, cheese, nuts & raisins, an apple & milk - we were told we couldn't stop, and had to eat as we marched.

That first day, Good Friday it was, we walked as far as Reading, a town which had barricaded itself in against the onslaught. We were allowed to use neither their schools to sleep nor their pubs to drink in. We overcame the first problem by sleeping in marquees, which the Empire Loyalists half heartedly tried to sabotage (here is a sign of our success - 1960 they threw rubbish over the marchers, 1961 they yelled abuse, 1962 they kept out of sight). When looking round the town for somewhere to drink, we kept meeting others on a similar quest, and between us we must have covered every street in the town. However, we finally found one pub willing to serve us, but unfortunately, a great many marchers had already discovered it - never before have I been in a pub with no beer. That night too, I sold song sheets round the marquees, but gave up when I found myself trying to sell one to the same person for the third time (and he'd bought one the first time I asked).

When we went into the marquee for the night, we found ourselves next to some Cockney youths, who fed us on salmon sandwiches, and one of whom kept trying to sell me a battleship - "It'll make good scrap." Then, when I was almost asleep - "Want to buy a bomb?"



There was great mirth when some boy got pyjamas out, and proceeded to change discreetly. They were even amused when I got a hairbrush out the next morning. We were sleeping near the entrance, and every time we woke up during the night we found feet poised just over our faces.

In the morning we discovered that there was nowhere to wash, or to perform other necessary tasks, so we went up into the town and found a ladies where we could have a twopenny wash, with soap leaf and paper towel, or a threepenny one, with soap leaf and linen towel. Then we queued an hour for a mug of tea, and ate a breakfast of crispbread, nuts and raisins and an orange. When we started marching it began to rain, and didn't stop all day. Sally had blisters and we stopped at a Red Cross place to have them seen to. She had some difficulty getting her stocking off from under her jeans, and when we started off again the March had disappeared into the wet grey distance, so we hopped onto the back of a lorry and caught it up again. We squelched along till tea time, when we sat in a field and got soaked. It was too wet even to eat, and anyway, the crispbread was rather soggy by this time, and the nuts and raisin bags had burst and spewed their contents over everything.

We had been provided with accommodation at Slough, we walked miles to find our school. We were soaked to the skin, so we took off as many clothes as we respectably could, and draped them over radiators, then went to find food. You could only have tea if you'd got a container for it, so this Cypriot fed me on fruit salad, so that he could have the tin filled with tea. Quite a number of marchers had had to drop out by now, because of an outbreak of German measles, but we were spot-free. We could have done with getting rid of some people, though, such as the ones in our room, who decided to play football in the middle of the night.

In the morning the sun was shining, and it got hotter and hotter. On Friday we had been told that someone wanted to make a film of us (the London Festival Singers plus a few others such as me and John Brunner), and they had taken a few preliminary shots. Exactly who "they" were we never quite discovered, except that it was something to do with Quakers. Anyway, today they decided to do the film proper, and people kept coming to tell us that the cameras were round the next corner, and would we start singing please. So everytime we approached a bend we started to bawl out "The H-Bombs Thunder", only to discover an empty road ahead of us. Eventually we found the right bend, and Sally turned to a mass of paralysed terror when she thought the camera was fixed on her. Since we were in greater London by the end of the day, we were able to go to Sally's flat for the night. It was good to sleep in a bed again, though we did have some difficulty getting up in time in the morning.

Though the choir was supposed to be going early to Hyde Park, to sing there, Sally and I preferred to march all the way. Anyhow, they didn't start singing till we got there, so it didn't matter. We marched down Whitehall, but couldn't go to Trafalgar Square because Mosley was speaking there to an audience of about six, so we turned off towards the river, and then found ourselves marching back down Whitehall, with Canon Collins greeting us for the second time. I suppose we would have gone on for ever if we hadn't broken away to get our rucksacks from St. Pauls. As it was, the police kept trying to push us back into the ranks.

The March really ended for us on Monday evening when we went to an after-Aldermaston sing-song, where Sally and the choir sang "Moscow Nights". Someone (actually Alex Campbell, but I do not like these name slingers) said that it sounded like a genuine Russian peasant choir trying to sing a genuine Russian folksong - in English.

We hitched home on Tuesday, after having a bit of culture at the Tate, where murmurs of "Feet sore," seemed to follow us round the galleries. We were given a lift by an army man, but he bought us some food, so there was no ill feeling. In fact people's attitude towards us is interesting. The only abuse hurled at us was by small boys, and many people applauded as we passed. They even put out jugs of water and glasses for us, on the hot days. Anyone, except the most biassed, bigotted person, must agree that a march of sixty thousand makes some impressign.

Quote overheard from a spectator: "And some of them even look quite intelligent."

.....Maggie Thompson

The spangled sky is beckoning me;
"Escape, rise up," it pleads.
The aesthite towers of war torn mares
Spin crystal webs of fragile truth
With silvery prayers, in hope that man
Will rise above Tellurian spheres;
And conquer Man, ancestral fears.

